

## **IN THE TITLE**

Please amend the title of the invention as follows:

**~~Ball and Socket~~ Assembly for Suspending an Object from a  
Sloped Surface**

## **IN THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claims 1-22.

Please add new claims 23-52 as set forth below.

A complete listing of all claims in this application is set forth below.

Claims 1-22(canceled).

23. (new) An assembly for suspending an object from a sloped surface, comprising:

a bracket defining a socket surface;

a retainer including (i) a generally hemispherical body having an outer surface configured to be received by said socket surface, said body defining a first longitudinal axis, and (ii) a sleeve structure having a central bore that defines a second longitudinal axis, wherein said first longitudinal axis and said second longitudinal axis define an oblique angle  $\alpha$ , and

a rod supported by said retainer and at least partially positioned within said sleeve structure.

24. (new) The assembly of claim 23, wherein  $5.0^\circ < \alpha < 55.0^\circ$ .

25. (new) The assembly of claim 24, wherein  $25.0^\circ < \alpha < 55.0^\circ$ .

26. (new) The assembly of claim 25, wherein  $25.0^\circ < \alpha < 35.0^\circ$ .

27. (new) The assembly of claim 23, wherein:

said body defines an interior space, and

said sleeve structure is at least partially located within said interior space.

28. The assembly of claim 23, wherein said rod extends entirely through said central bore of said sleeve structure.

29. The assembly of claim 23, further comprising a pin, wherein:  
said rod has defined therein a first hole,  
said pin is configured to extend through said first hole, and  
said retainer further includes a first receptacle structure located adjacent to said sleeve structure and configured to receive at least a portion of said pin.

30. The assembly of claim 29, wherein:  
said body includes a generally circular rim, and  
said first receptacle structure is spaced apart from said generally circular rim.

31. The assembly of claim 23, further comprising a pin, wherein:  
said rod has defined therein a first hole and a second hole,  
said pin is configured to extend through both said first hole and said second hole so as to define a first lateral pin segment and a second lateral pin segment, and  
said retainer further includes (i) a first receptacle structure located adjacent to said sleeve structure and configured to receive said first lateral pin segment therein, and (ii) a second receptacle structure also located adjacent to said sleeve structure and configured to receive said second lateral pin segment therein.

32. The assembly of claim 23, wherein:

said socket surface of said bracket defines an opening,

said bracket has an alignment member extending into said opening,

said outer surface of said body having defined therein a channel, and

said alignment member is located within said channel.

33. The assembly of claim 32, wherein:

said body includes a generally circular rim, and

said channel intersects said generally circular rim.

34. (new) An assembly for suspending an object from a sloped surface, comprising:

a bracket defining a support surface;

a retainer including (i) a body having a convex outer surface positioned in contact with said support surface, said body defining a first longitudinal axis, and (ii) a sleeve structure having a central bore that defines a second longitudinal axis, wherein said first longitudinal axis and said second longitudinal axis define an oblique angle  $\alpha$ , and

an elongated support at least partially positioned within said sleeve structure.

35. (new) The assembly of claim 34, wherein  $5.0^\circ < \alpha < 55.0^\circ$ .

36. (new) The assembly of claim 35, wherein  $25.0^{\circ} < \alpha < 55.0^{\circ}$ .

37. (new) The assembly of claim 36, wherein  $25.0^{\circ} < \alpha < 35.0^{\circ}$ .

38. (new) The assembly of claim 34, wherein:

said body defines an interior space, and

said sleeve structure is at least partially located within said interior space.

39. The assembly of claim 34, wherein said elongated support member extends entirely through said central bore of said sleeve structure.

40. The assembly of claim 34, further comprising a pin, wherein:

said elongated support structure has defined therein a first hole,

said pin is configured to extend through said first hole, and

said retainer further includes a first receptacle structure located adjacent to said sleeve structure and configured to receive at least a portion of said pin.

41. The assembly of claim 40, wherein:

said body includes a generally circular rim, and

said first receptacle structure is spaced apart from said generally circular rim.

42. The assembly of claim 34, further comprising a pin, wherein:  
said elongated support has defined therein a first hole and a second hole,  
said pin is configured to extend through both said first hole and said  
second hole so as to define a first lateral pin segment and a second lateral pin  
segment, and

said retainer further includes (i) a first receptacle structure located  
adjacent to said sleeve structure and configured to receive said first lateral pin  
segment therein, and (ii) a second receptacle structure also located adjacent to  
said sleeve structure and configured to receive said second lateral pin segment  
therein.

43. The assembly of claim 34, wherein:  
said support surface of said bracket defines an opening,  
said bracket has an alignment member extending into said opening,  
said outer surface of said body having defined therein a channel, and  
said alignment member is located within said channel.

44. The assembly of claim 43, wherein:  
said body includes a generally circular rim, and  
said channel intersects said generally circular rim.

45. The assembly of claim 34, wherein said body possesses a generally  
hemispherical shape.

46. (new) An assembly for suspending an object from a sloped surface, comprising:

a bracket defining a support surface;

a retainer including a generally cup-shaped body having an outer surface positioned in contact with said support surface; and

an elongated support attached to said retainer,

wherein said body defines a first longitudinal axis,

wherein said body further defines a bore for receiving said elongated support within an interior space of said body,

wherein said bore defines a second longitudinal axis; and

wherein said elongated support extends through said bore, and

wherein said first longitudinal axis and said second longitudinal axis define an oblique angle  $\alpha$ .

47. (new) The assembly of claim 46, wherein  $5.0^\circ < \alpha < 55.0^\circ$ .

48. (new) The assembly of claim 47, wherein  $25.0^\circ < \alpha < 35.0^\circ$ .

49. The assembly of claim 46, further comprising a pin, wherein:  
said elongated support has defined therein a first hole and a second hole,  
said pin is configured to extend through both said first hole and said  
second hole so as to define a first lateral pin segment and a second lateral pin  
segment, and

said retainer further includes (i) a first receptacle structure located  
adjacent to said bore and configured to receive said first lateral pin segment  
therein, and (ii) a second receptacle structure also located adjacent to said bore  
and configured to receive said second lateral pin segment therein.

50. The assembly of claim 46, wherein:

said support surface of said bracket defines an opening,  
said bracket has an alignment member extending into said opening,  
said outer surface of said body having defined therein a channel, and  
said alignment member is located within said channel.

51. The assembly of claim 50, wherein:

said body includes a generally circular rim, and  
said channel intersects said generally circular rim.

52. The assembly of claim 46, wherein said body possesses a generally  
hemispherical shape.